

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, CSCE, GE, YO
SUBJECT: HONECKER'S VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA - A MIX OF PLUSES AND
MINUSES

REF: BERLIN 5047

SUMMARY: THE LAVISH AMOUNT OF PRESS COVERAGE IN THE EAST
BERLIN PRESS ON CHIEF OF STATE HONECKER'S VISIT TO
YUGOSLAVIA SUGGESTS THAT THE GDR HAS SCORED A PUBLIC
RELATIONS GAIN. THE JOINT HONECKER-TITO COMMUNIQUE FAILS
HOWEVER TO CONFIRM THE SUBSTANCE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS.
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THE COMMUNIQUE CONTAINS SOME PLUSES FOR THE GDR IN THE FORM
OF ACCEPTANCE OF SOME WORDING DEAR TO THE HEARTS OF THE SED
LEADERSHIP SUPPORTING GDR SOVEREIGNTY AND THE RIGHT TO RESIST
INTERFERENCE IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS. THIS IS
BALANCED BY GDR ACCEPTANCE OF YUGOSLAVIA'S RIGHT TO
DEVELOP INDEPENDENTLY AND ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL
SITUATION WITHIN THE PARAMETERS OF MARXIST-LENINIST

DOCTRINE. THE GDR'S INTEREST IN DEVELOPING ECONOMIC TIES WITH YUGOSLAVIA APPEARS EVIDENT FROM THE INCLUSION OF GDR ECONOMIC EXPERT MITTAG ON THE DELEGATION. THE COMMUNIQUE HOWEVER STATES ONLY THAT THE BASIS FOR LONGER TERM ECONOMIC COOPERATION HAS BEEN LAID SINCE TITO'S VISIT TO BERLIN IN LATE 1974. SED ORGAN NEUES DEUTSCHLAND CONCLDED ON JANUARY 18 THAT THE HONECKER VISIT " DEEPENED THE FRIENDSHIP" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE LIKELY TO DEVELOP SLOWLY IN VIEW OF AN APPARENT LACK OF AN ECONOMIC BASIS AND BECAUSE OF THE TWO DECADES OF STRONG GDR CRITICISM OF TITO AND HIS INDEPENDENT ROAD TO COMMUNISM. END SUMMARY.

1. THE GDR HAS GIVEN LAVISH NEWS COVERAGE TO THE JUST-CONCLUDED VISIT OF CHIEF OF STATE HOENCKER INCLUDING ON JANUARY 15 THE DAY OF HONECKER'S RETURN, THE PUBLICATION IN FULL OF THE HONECKER-TITO JOINT COMMUNIQUE ON THE FRONT PAGES OF THE MAJOR EAST BERLIN NEWSPAPERS. THIS COVERAGE WAS PRECEDED ON JANUARY 13 AND 14 WITH PUBLICATION OF PHOTOS AND REPORTS OF THE VISITS MADE BY HONECKER IN BOTH SERBIA AND CROATIA WHICH TOOK UP THE FIRST THREE PAGES OF THE NEWSPAPERS EACH DAY. THE IMPRESSION WAS WIDELY GIVEN THAT HONECKER, BY VISITIN YUGOSLAVIA AND HOLDING CONVERSATIONS WITH TITO, HAS ADDED YET MORE SUBSTANCE TO THE CLAIM THAT THE GDR HAS COME OF AGE IN THE WORLD COMMUNIST MOVEMENT AND IN INTERNATIONAL LIFE.

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2. HONECKER VISIT WAS BILLED HERE AS BOTH A STATE AND PARTY VISIT AND THE MAIN TOPICS OF CONVERSATION ARE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN BILATERAL RELATIONS, THE GLOBAL POLITICAL SITUATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT. HONECKER IS SAID TO HAVE DESCRIBED THE BELGRADE PORTION OF HIS VISIT AS "EXTRAORDINARILY USEFUL" AND TITO TO HAVE RESPONDED THAT THE TWO LEADERS FULLY AGREED " ON ALL IMPORTANT QUESTIONS".

3. FROM AN EAST BERLIN PERSPECTIVE, THE COMMUNIQUE WAS OF INTEREST FOR THE FOLLOWING POINTS: A) THE EXPLICIT RECOGNITION BY THE SED THAT THERE CAN BE " A VARIETY OF FORMS AND WAYS" TO ACHIEVE SOCIALISM BECAUSE OF THE "BREADTH" OF THE MOVEMENT AND THE VARIATION IN CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE COMMUNIST PARTIES ARE OBLIGED TO OPERATE. THIS IS A FORMULATIION REJECTED BY THE SED UNTIL THE BERLIN CONFERENCE IN JUNE 1976, AND WHICH, EVEN AT THAT TIME, WAS ONLY IMPLIED AS ACCEPTABLE TO THE SED AND NOT STATED TO BE SO. THE BERLIN CONFERENCE

DOCUMENT IS DESCRIBED AS AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRENGTHENING OF PEACE, SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROGRESS, IN EUROPE. B) IN WHAT WAS DESCRIBED AS THE "HIGH LEVEL" OF BILATERAL GDR/YUGOSLAVIA RELATIONS, ATTENTION WAS GIVEN EARLY IN THE LONG COMMUNIQUE TO THE " POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SCIENTIFIC-TECHNICAL CULTURAL-INFORMATIONAL AND OTHER FIELDS" OF JOINT COOPERATION. IN THE SAME CONTEXT, REFERENCE IS MADE TO THE BASIS OF THIS COOPERATION AS THE "CONSISTENT RESPECT" FOR THE PRINCIPLES OF SOVEREIGNTY, INDEPENDENCE AND NON-INTERVENTION IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS AS WELL AS RESPECT FOR THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF SOCIALIST DEVELOPMENT AND THE PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE INTERNATIONAL POSITION OF EACH COUNTRY. THIS IS A MIXTURE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF HELSINKI AND THE GUIDELINES REFLECTED IN THE BERLIN CONFERENCE DECLARATION. IT IMPLICITLY RECOGNIZES THE SPECIAL PLACE OF YUGOSLAVIA IN THE COMMUNIST COMMUNITY WHICH IS BALANCED OFF BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RECOGNITION OF ONE OF THE GDR'S MAJOR GAINS FROM HELSINKI- THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE GDR'S SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE FROM THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC. C) THE GDR IS ASSOCIATED IN THE COMMUNIQUE WITH THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES AND THEIR FIGHT FOR "PEACE, SECURITY, RELAXATION OF TENSIONS AND COOPERATION" ON THE BASIS OF EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL COUNTRIES AND FOR THE CREATION OF " CONSTRUCTIVE" POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS ON AN INTERNATIONAL SCALE.

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THE MAJOR PLUS FOR THE GDR
IS ITS ASSOCIATION THROUGH PRESIDENT TITO
WITH THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES. IT IS AN ASSOCIATION
WHICH UNILATERAL VERBIAGE FROM EAST BERLIN ALONE COULD NOT
ACHIEVE FOR THE GDR. D) THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO
ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES COMES
THROUGH IN THE COMMUNIQUE WHICH ADDRESSES THE SATIS-
FACTION OF BOTH SIDES THAT ECONOMIC RELATIONS HAVE
DEVELOPED AND CAN BE FURTHER DEVELOPED ON THE BASIS
OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND ASSISTANCE. THE COMMUNIQUE SAYS
THAT THE PREREQUISITES FOR LONG TERM ECONOMIC COOPERATION
HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED. THESE STATEMENTS CAN BE SEEN
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AS A GDR EFFORT TO
FOSTER BETTER ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH YUGOSLAVIA.
THE PRESENCE OF GUENTER MITTAG ON THE GDR DELEGATION GIVES
SUPPORT TO THE IDEA THAT ECONOMIC MATTERS WERE HIGH
ON THE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION.

4. AN ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN NEUES DEUTSCHLAND
ON JANUARY 13 WHICH SUGGESTED THAT THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE WOULD
BE A COMPILATION TO TWO DIFFERING POINTS OF VIEW WITH
HONECKER STRESSING DISARMAMENT AND A RELAXATION OF
TENSIONS AND TITO DEVOTING HIS ATTENTION TO THE FORTH-
COMING CSCE CONFERENCE IN BELGRADE. IN THE FINAL
COMMUNIQUE, THESE POINTS ARE COVERED WITH REFERENCES
TO DISARMAMENT HOWEVER CLEARLY BESTING THE REFERENCES
TO CSCE IN TERMS OF COVERAGE. THERE WAS HOWEVER NO
SUGGESTION THAT HONECKER HAD ANY DIFFICULTY WITH TITO'S
STATEMENT THAT THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE SHOULD BE A
CONSTRUCTIVE MEETING, FREE FROM ACCUSATIONS AND HAVE
THE AIM OF ENCOURAGING FURTHER STEPS TOWARD SECURITY
IN TERMS OF THE FINAL ACT. SUCH AN INTERPRETATION OF
BELGRADE HAS BEEN SET AS GOAL FOR MORE THAN A YEAR.

5. HONECKER'S VISIT TO BELGRADE PROVIDED THE SECOND OPPORTUNITY FOR BILATERAL CONVERSATIONS WITH PRESIDENT TITO SINCE TITO'S VISIT TO EAST GERMANY IN NOVEMBER, 1974. THE TWO LEADERS MET IN EAST BERLIN FOR DISCUSSIONS AT THE TIME OF THE BERLIN CONFERENCE IN MID-1976 AS WELL. COMPARED WITH THE 1974 MEETING, THE BELGRADE VISIT RESULTED IN STRESSING THE POSITIVE NATURE OF GDR/YUGOSLAV RELATIONS WITHOUT THE NEED TO ADDRESS IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES WHICH HAD BEEN AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN BILATERAL RELATIONS AT THE TIME OF TITO'S BERLIN VISIT.

6. THE PRESENCE ON THE GDR DELEGATION OF ERICH MIELKE, THE HEAD OF GDR STATE SECURITY APPARATUS, GAVE RISE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WESTERN PRESS SPECULATION THAT YUGOSLAVIA CONTINUES TO BE INTERESTED IN TOURISM FROM THE GDR. THE PROBLEM IN THE PAST HAS BEEN THAT GDR CITIZENS, ONCE IN YUGOSLAVIA, FOUND IT A CONVENIENT PLACE FROM WHICH TO CONTINUE THEIR JOURNEY WESTWARD. ONE NEWS REPORT STATED THAT MIELKE ASKED FOR A GUARANTEE THAT EAST GERMANS VISITING YUGOSLAVIA WOULD BE RETURNED TO THE GDR IF THEY ATTEMPTED TO ESCAPE, A PROPOSITION WHICH, ACCORDING TO THE SAME SOURCE, WAS DECISIVELY REJECTED BY THE YUGOSLAVS.

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE SUGGESTS AN ACCOMMODATION OF VIEWS, THERE IS LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE EVIDENT IN IT. HONECKER'S VISIT CAN BE VIEWED AS A PUBLIC RELATIONS SUCCESS FOR THE GDR HEAD OF STATE. HE HAD MORE TO GAIN FROM CONSULTATIONS WITH TITO (NOW THAT IDEOLOGICAL MATTERS ARE ON THE BACK BURNER) THAN THE OTHER WAY AROUND. WHAT THE GDR HAS TO OFFER YUGOSLAVIA IN ECONOMIC TERMS IS UNCLEAR.

8. A NEUES DEUTSCHLAND EDITORIAL ON JANUARY 18 MAKES NO GREATER CLAIM THAN THAT THE HONECKER VISIT "DEEPENED THE FRIENDSHIP" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ON A STATE, PARTY AND POPULAR LEVEL. WHILE THE CLAIM IS EXAGGERATED AT LEAST AS FAR AS THE GDR PUBLIC IS CONCERNED, IT DOES SHOW THE INTEREST WHICH THE GDR HAS IN SHOWING THAT PAST IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES WITH YUGOSLAVIA HAVE BEEN CLEARED UP EVEN THOUGH THE CURRENT SUBSTANCE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS MAY NOT SUPPORT A STRONGER CLAIM TO STATE TIES. THERE HAS BEEN NO MENTION IN THE PRESS COVERAGE OF CPSU LEADER BREZHNEV'S RECENT VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA ALTHOUGH HONECKER'S VISIT COULD BE ASSUMED TO BE A FOLLOW-UP VISIT CALCULATED TO IMPLY FURTHER ACCEPTANCE OF YUGOSLAVIA WITHIN THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT. POLANSKY

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